

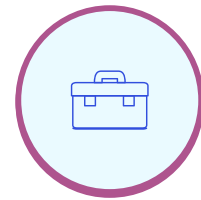


THE TOOLKIT

A collection of resources designed to provide practical tools for women and non-binary undergraduate students.

Advancing as a Young Professional

Oftentimes young professionals, who are in their first full-time position or even just interning, will assume that they are too young and inexperienced to move up in an organization - "advancement will come naturally with time". While yes, more time with an organization will increase your odds of advancing, it won't be enough to just be there for a long time. It's never too early to set yourself up for advancement. Whether you're looking to rise within your organization or eventually find a new position that better suits your interests, there are plenty of steps you can take to begin that journey. This issue of the Toolkit will cover a few practices that will help.



"I WAS TASKED TO CREATE SIMULATIONS USING A SOFTWARE THAT NO ONE ON MY TEAM WAS FAMILIAR WITH. RATHER THAN GETTING STUCK HERE, I TOOK THE INITIATIVE. I EMAILED PROFESSORS AT MY UNIVERSITY THAT HAD MORE EXPERIENCE TO GET THEIR INSIGHT ON MY GOAL. I ALSO LOOKED UP TUTORIALS ONLINE AND FOLLOWED THEM ON MY OWN TO GET FAMILIAR WITH THE PROGRAM. BY MOTIVATING MYSELF, I WAS ABLE TO BE A BETTER TEAM MEMBER AND CREATE RESULTS THAT WERE VITAL TO THE PROJECT."

- MECHANICAL ENGINEERING MAJOR

Tips & Tools

1

Find a mentor. This may sound intimidating but there are a number of ways to find a mentor. First, see if your organization has its own mentoring program. If it does, take advantage! It may not pair you up with a lifelong mentor but it will at the very least connect you with somebody who can help you navigate the nuances of your specific organization. If your organization doesn't have its own program, do some research and see if there are organizations dedicated to mentoring in your field. Lastly, do your own outreach. Ask somebody in your existing network to see if they would be willing to mentor you or point you in the direction of somebody who could.

2

Develop new skills. Professional development is key to your growth as both a young professional in general and as a young/new employee. Participating in professional development both within your organization and outside of it will increase your success in your current role, indicate to supervisors that you're dedicated and willing to grow as well as open doors to new opportunities. Take some time to reflect on your personal strengths and weaknesses as well as the skills more experienced professionals have in your organization. What can you work on to reinforce your strengths, strengthen your weaknesses and expand your skill base?

3

Record your achievements. It's unlikely that your supervisor will remember what you have accomplished in your position so it will be important to record what you have done so you can not only ask to advance but to include on your resume for future positions. Keep note of project details and metrics of success - if you ran a program for students, how many students did it serve? If a project of your increased revenue for the company, by how much? Advancement will happen after demonstrating your ability to contribute to the success of your team, department or organization.

4

Ask for advancement. Your supervisor won't know you're interested in advancement unless you tell them. Set up a time with your supervisor to discuss development and let them know that you believe you're ready to contribute more to the organization. Come prepared with your recorded accomplishments and an idea of how you can contribute at a higher level. The worst they can say is no. If this happens, ask for feedback on what you can do to ensure you're in a better position to advance in the future. If they say there are no opportunities and there won't be in the future, it may be a good time to begin looking for advancement opportunities elsewhere.

Further Reading

"Professional Development Advice for Young Professionals" by Elizabeth Callahan | Buffalo Niagara Partnership

"Dan Pink: Essential Career Advice for Ambitious Young Professionals" by Andy Molinsky | Forbes

"Six Steps to Leadership for Young Professionals" by Jason Kent | Monster

A note from the author

I know just how difficult it can be to start thinking about professional development and advancing when you're just starting out - it's enough just to get adjusted to the organization and the work you're doing let alone figuring out how to advance. It's okay, everybody feels that way! Start small with just asking for advice and seeing what programs are offered through your organization. Never be afraid to ask questions and do research, that is what will set you apart from the rest and open up new opportunities. - Sam Collins, MA.